Question 2 – Hansard Page 6

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: But we are about to have a federal election next year. If we accept what the AEC says in their submission, it is extremely vulnerable to attacks using generative AI, and they give the most recent South Korean election as the example. We established this inquiry with a reporting date in September in part to try to get some sense of what we can do, and I see nothing in your submission that helps us—nothing at all. You're the principal scientific think tank for the country, and you've brought nothing to the table. So I'm going to ask you to take on notice what we can do in the short and medium term to put in place some of these guardrails, because, if it's just going to be voluntary AI standards, that's not going to help. It might be a tiny little step forward, but it's not really going to help with unethical players. So I'll give you a chance now to respond briefly about what we can do in the short to medium term to put in those ethical, practical, democratically enforcing guardrails. What can we do?

Ms Solar: Something shared in the response from the department of industry with the interim safe and responsible AI report is an option around mandatory guardrails, which are being actively discussed by the AI expert advisory group. Something more immediate and agile that my team is already developing is the voluntary AI safety standard. So this is a way to share some of those best practices and enable industry to succeed with AI. At the National AI Centre, our focus is to enable industry, and some of the challenges that industry are facing are addressing the risks that the industry has. For instance, industry might face commercial risks with AI that may create harm to individuals, society or groups. They also face reputational risk if AI goes wrong, and they also face risk if they are not compliant with regulation. But perhaps the most critical element to highlight is that AI is not in a vacuum. The current regulatory landscape still applies to AI, whether that be the Privacy Act, the antidiscrimination acts or the competition acts. Those elements very much apply to AI today. We will also take that on notice to share the response to the safe and responsible AI discussion paper, where CSIRO outlines in a 140-page document some of the fundamental responsible AI elements that will be important for Australia to succeed.

Answer

CSIRO's submission to the Department of Industry, Science and Resources Supporting Responsible AI discussion paper is available here: https://consult.industry.gov.au/supporting-responsible-ai/submission/view/157